

# **Working in the Time of COVID-19 Oral History Project**

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**Kelly Moore**  
**Violist and Music Teacher, Seattle**

**Interviewee:** Kelly Moore

**Interviewers:** Kevin Leiferman

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KELLY MOORE 00:00:16: This meeting is being recorded. Continue. Okay.

KEVIN LEIFERMAN 00:00:20: Alrighty. And just to clarify again, is it okay that I record this meeting?

KELLY 00:00:27: It is okay that you are recording this meeting.

KEVIN 00:00:30: Oh, great. Thanks. So just also—just a little bit of a lead in here: This is Kevin Leiferman and I'm speaking with Kelly [Moore] and we are both in Seattle but we are connected here on Zoom today because of the COVID-19 pandemic. So we can't be meeting in person, unfortunately. It's June 6, 2020. Here we go. Wow. So—Can you just speak about yourself and what you do and just general—who is Kelly?

KELLY 00:01:15: Yeah! Yes, my name is, in fact, Kelly and I am a violist. I focus on teaching as the main core of my musical career—private teaching. I play occasionally in a string quartet, with several orchestras, a chamber orchestra. I freelance, so I'm not contracted by any particular orchestra. I am hired

as needed as a sub or for pickup gigs. Yeah, a nice little jigsaw puzzle of ensembles and gigs and weddings and teaching.

KEVIN 00:02:03: Yeah, cool, awesome, great. So obviously, with this pandemic that we're living in, I'm sure a great number of the things that you do changed pretty drastically—due to those things. Just—Just a highlight on a few of them, but can you go into how you're teaching? Since that's the bulk of what you do, how did that change and—not just how it is now, but how was it in the very beginning of how that unfolded?

KELLY 00:02:50: Yeah. Yes, I would say everything that I do has changed. Like 100% of the things that I do have changed. As far as teaching in particular, I do remember I was actually out of the country from mid-January to mid-February and the coronavirus and COVID were in the news, but It seemed fairly isolated to China. Right as I was getting home, I think there were a few cruise ships that were struggling to find a place to dock because people didn't want them, but it hadn't really reached—at least knowingly—it was not knowingly in the United States yet. So I got home in mid-February and, over the next month, things—it became apparent that it was going to be much more serious and my—I think in the couple weeks leading up to when things really locked down, so probably by early March, students were still coming in person to their lessons. I had asked them, like I do any time of year, "If you're not feeling well, please don't come to your lessons. Just in the interest of the—the little community that comes to my house, please don't come."

So I reiterated that request that if you're feeling unwell at all, regardless of what you think it is, please don't come. I had everyone wash their hands before their lesson, and after, as well. And I took time in between each lesson, although I didn't have time scheduled in for that, but I quickly would sanitize my front door and—because I teach at my house—which is an added risk and complication—but I would sanitize my front door and the sink in my studio, the doorknobs, and the toilet handle, and all the things, and then we would start with the next person. So there were a few steps that I took before quarantine fully started. I think schools closed before businesses were really shuttered. So whenever school closed—I think it was said at the beginning—maybe for two weeks. I think—just to add to that, it was sort of the lower third of March when the schools closed, and it was, I think, originally a two week—I think it went from two weeks to a month, (*laughs*) and here we are in June.

I remember scheduling eight weeks of zoom lessons, and I thought, Well, that seems excessive. (*laughs*) Anyway, yeah, I did some sanitizing. Then, as soon as schools closed, I wrote a letter to my studio and said, "We're not going to meet in person anymore. We're going to try online lessons." There was a learning curve of trying FaceTime and trying Zoom, and I think that you've experienced this, too—I have bought so many accessories to try and augment and improve my teaching experience, which—I'm grateful for technology and all the things we can buy, but it's also been really frustrating to continue to try and improve that experience. But—so, some studio cleaning before quarantine really started. Once schools closed, I officially went to online lessons. We landed on using Zoom as the main

platform. All but one of my students use Zoom. I've also started using Marco Polo as a kind of augmenting app to be able to send little snippets back and forth. I have a student whose home internet connection is just not—it's not good and it's almost impossible to do anything of meaning through a tel—through a call like this, so we send Marco Polos back and forth which has been really helpful. I don't—there have been a lot of changes, and I'm sure, again, you've noticed this, too, that the difference between having your lesson in a designated space where you leave your house and you go to somewhere special, and there are kind of signals— (long pause) [referring to cat] Just chewing on a paperback book, because why not?

The difference between going to a studio or my house, leaving your home, leaving the distractions behind—having lessons where the student is in their home environment. I had one student whose dad was moving boxes or papers back and forth and just kept walking between her and the camera. It's so hard because you're in their house and it's hard to knock and be like, "Hi! (*laughs*) I know that we're in your house, but could you not do that right now? This is already an uphill battle and what if you didn't do that?" So there are a lot of distractions from pets to parents to poor internet connection to they have their phones next to them or using them as a metronome, which is fine, but it's easy—I mean, I have that problem. If I go and think I'm going to check my mail and then I see I got a text and—there are a lot of—so many distractions to be had.

KEVIN 00:09:00: Definitely. I can definitely speak to almost all of those things being prevalent in my own experiences as the—throughout this situation. What would you say has been some of the hardest obstacles to overcome? I know you were talking about distraction and internet, but in terms of the actual meat of the teaching—like teaching the viola or the violin.

KELLY 00:09:45: Yes.

KEVIN 00:09:45: What parts of those things are difficult?

KELLY 00:09:52: I—well—my approach to teaching, especially because of several recent courses that I've taken, like my first book of Suzuki training—the teacher that I worked with for that is really into kinetic learning. And kinesthetic—I guess kinesthetic learning [inaudible] \_\_\_\_\_ that to teach something new, you want to grab their hand and make the shape for them, so they know what it feels like, and to not be able to do that is really hard. I want to reach to the camera and be like, "No, like this." So that's hard. It's really hard to tell if someone's tone is nice. I think, for most teachers, tone is really paramount. I've had a few moments where I feel like I could hear—I don't know if you have this on the cello, but we talk about ringing threes where the lower string resonates—so, ringing four, I guess—but—I think I've heard that maybe once or twice through internet connections and it's been a source of joy for me to be like, "Oh my gosh, I can—it's there." But, I really—I really miss that. (pauses) I think that just as an important part of teaching as technique and tone is the connection that you get from it, and not being able to make eye contact and share—share joy—I just had a student who finished book one. I'm not a

full on Suzuki teacher, so that looks different for her, but I still wanted to have a party and celebrate that and it's really hard to just be like, "Yeah, you did it! Okay, bye." That celebration doesn't feel the same.

KEVIN 00:11:38: I'm having a couple—just to add to that—I had a couple that have finished book one during this, and we're postponing our—I let them continue on, but knowing that when it's over, or when we're able, we're gonna do the party, and we're gonna have the recital because—exactly what you're saying—it's such an important part of the connection. So, in line with connecting musicians: what kind of—as I know you do, because I participate in some of the same things that you do performance-wise, can we go talk about some of those performance things that we're missing and what about those experiences you're missing?

KELLY 00:12:44: Yeah. Um—I might cry, surprisingly [tearing up].

KEVIN 00:12:51: No, I mean, it's hard. It's such a hard subject. Because—we've talked several times through this as well, so I know all—all the difficulties that we both had to go through, but especially you, especially in this time. But whatever you're comfortable saying, of course.

KELLY 00:13:17: Yeah, for sure. [tearfully] I think, like a lot of musicians, when you're young, and in public school, making friends is hard, especially if you feel odd in any way, or different, or like you don't fit in for whatever reason. I've always been super socially awkward and I think [choked up] it took this experience for me to realize my entire world is built around the friendships that I've made through music. (*sniffs*) And—I really miss that. My motivation to practice has been pretty low because, like a lot of people, I'm motivated by a deadline, but, also, my greatest joy in music is playing chamber music and I really miss that (*sniffs*)—and I know that a lot of people do. But I think that that has been one of the hardest things or (*sniffs*)—just realizations that playing music is a job, and it's a career, and it's something that we've all worked really hard toward. It takes effort. It takes a lot of drive, (*sniffs*) and there are days when it—it is just a job but—that by and large it's been my way to connect with people and I really miss those experiences. So, in hindsight right now, and even knowing that this is temporary, it's made me especially grateful. And (pauses) I feel that hole of not being able to connect with people personally (*sniffs*) right now and that—I stay in touch with my friends like you and Michael and Leah, and all these people that we know and I'm grateful to get to talk to them and see them and see you guys but—I miss playing music [tearfully] with people, and—I don't know. Yeah (*laughs*). Yeah.

KEVIN 00:15:52: Yeah! It's certainly really tough. I—I've had a lot of the same feelings and I'm lucky that I have a musician that I can collaborate with. And that has been a saving grace for sure, because I think if that hadn't been—like, the actual human contact—Because I've had my own, through U dub [University of Washington, Seattle], collaboration. (*laughs*) Yeah. It's definitely not the same as anything that we can create even between two people. And we're used to collaborating with at least twenty sometimes in our conductorless chamber orchestra that we play in, which is a totally different experience that can't be recreated in this. So I know—I know how difficult that is. I guess, with that, all

those things that were canceled—we had a couple concerts planned as well as the fundraising gala that was supposed to be this last weekend, which was going to be another music-making opportunity.

KELLY 00:17:24: Yeah.

KEVIN 00:17:30: Yeah, I—sorry I kind of lost track of where—

KELLY 00:17:33: That's okay.

KEVIN 00:17:38: But certainly it's changed.

KELLY 00:17:45: Something I do really miss—playing with NOCCO [NOrthern Corner Chamber Orchestra], the conductorless chamber orchestra. I think we kind of live in a strange experience where our job and our passion overlap and I think that is challenging—that is, a lot of people see that—you know, you meet a person on the street, "Oh you get to play music for a job, how wonderful your passion is your career."

And that's great, but also it can—I think that there are some challenges that come with that. I usually get annoyed when someone says that even if it's coming from a good place, but—so I'm sad in that I miss playing with NOCCO, and there are aspects of that frustrate me, but, right now, I would willingly look at a hand-drawn stage layout chart. I would love to see that right now. I would—I would welcome that experience. But it's also our job, and so I miss—I had a couple gigs lined up for March, April, May that are not happening. I'm sad that they're not happening from a musical and artistic perspective, because they were going to be great concerts and feature what I think was important in music, but they also paid, and I'm really grateful that I'm able to teach and that that's a source of income, and I'm grateful that my family is in a position to help me if things are super dire. I recognize the inherent privilege in both of those things because there are a lot of our friends who are musicians who were solely performers and, right now, they don't even have a private studio, so they're not able to be employed right now, which is really rough.

So, there's missing that. Then, as we go into summer, summer camp season is strangely—it's really important for students because it's a way for them to get outside of their school microcosm and meet other people, people that are better than them, people that are—are working to get to their level. All those connections are so important, and they're also jobs for us. They serve, I think, really important roles for everyone who's involved with it, whether you're a teacher or a student or an organizer, they're really valuable. So I'm sad that summer camp season is—is canceled for this year. I think that's going to be a bummer.

KEVIN 00:20:32: Yeah, for sure. I also like what you said about the summer camps being a moment for the kids to get out of their microcosm and into something different and then meet new people. I know that, for both of us, music has been a way to find our tribe.

KELLY 00:20:48: Yes.

KEVIN 00:20:48: And to find our chosen family that we can exist with. So that is kind of tricky. Now that whole—talking about how everything has changed and how it affected everything and how we sort of had to adapt, what do you see that we're doing now that might fold over into post-COVID life?

KELLY 00:21:39: Well, for teaching, in particular, if, for example, I am sick and I have a cold, or if a student is sick and has a cold, it's so easy now because we have—the skills are there to just say like, "Let's have it—let's have a remote lesson this week." So I'm really excited about that possibility. I think something that drives a lot of people who still come to their lessons when they are not feeling well or their parent is not feeling well is they don't want to lose the money because if you cancel late or just cancel the—canceling lessons often means that you're losing out on sixty, seventy, eighty dollars for an hour of someone's time. That's a lot of money to say goodbye to. I think students come—don't want to lose that. I respect that and understand that. But having, now, the capability and the experience of having online lessons, if someone isn't feeling well, and they're physically mentally up for having a lesson, we can just do it remotely. And I think that—that's exciting.

Also, kind of related to the same thing of having experience with online lessons is the ability to travel a little bit more. I have friends that play with the Spokane Symphony. My family lives in Boise and I have played with the philharmonic there before, and it's always been kind of a deterrent to think, "Well, I have to reschedule a week of lessons or just cancel them and then I'm losing additional income." Again, the idea of being able to maybe be a sub and play with Spokane every now and then and be gone for a week, I could still have lessons. We all know that they're not ideal, but they're certainly great, and I feel like in some ways that opens new doors for what's possible for us as teachers, and also maybe some security for students and consistency. It's really hard to balance wanting to stay active as a performer and be committed to your studio. I struggle with that a lot because I want to do both. It's often hard because rehearsing and teaching often take place at the same time, which is a challenge, but I'm hopeful about the opportunity—or not the opportunity, but the possibility of being able to travel. Or even if I were to take a week off and go somewhere, I could still teach a few lessons remotely that way.

KEVIN 00:24:42: I hadn't thought about that. That's such a good point of, often we, as teachers, when we're looking for the next gig, we're thinking about, "How is this gonna affect my schedule? Can I even move things around in order to make this work? Because so much of that, when teaching in person, is also like, Do I have the time to get to this place and get back to this place in order to keep the appointments?" Travel time is huge. So you have that flexibility where every once in a while you could have a remote lesson to continue the—Yeah, that's a really good point and interesting thing to think

about how it will change, for sure, or could change, I guess. And then—I know that, at least for me, and I think this is true for you, but most of our income comes from teaching. I know you did touch a little bit on how you are—are reliant on some of those gigs that do pay, but as a—now that you had to miss those, have you found that there are resources, and what is your experience with the community's response?

KELLY 00:26:19: To missing income or—?

KEVIN 00:26:23: Yeah, or whatever.

KELLY 00:26:27: Yeah, yeah. I haven't really—like I said, because my family's in a position to be able to be helpful, I have not applied for unemployment or lost income because—I don't know, there are so many people that need that, that need unemployment money to survive and I don't want to clutter that space with my application when it would be helpful but it is not essential to my—to my [?survival?].

KEVIN 00:26:59: [to cat] One more—there it is.

KELLY 00:27:09: Amazing.

KEVIN 00:27:10: I totally forgot that was gonna happen.

KELLY 00:27:14: What was it?

KEVIN 00:27:30: It was the auto feeder. The cat does is right there, and it's like—

KELLY 00:27:22: It does—do you have a pet-safe kind where there's a conveyor belt in it?

KEVIN 00:27:26: Yeah. So it's like an eighth of a cup per—

KELLY 00:27:30: Yes. Yes. Do you have the kind with the—Did you get the 3D splitter?

KEVIN 00:27:35: No, I need to get that though.

KELLY 00:27:37: Okay, we're going to talk about that later.

KEVIN 00:27:39: Okay, let's go back to—

KELLY 00:27:41: So, serious conversation. Yes, I haven't applied for unemployment, but I do—one of my best friends successfully applied for unemployment because she's someone who—she plays at the 5th Avenue [Theatre] and that pays really well when that's happening, but they're not on a contract. They

are freelance. It is show by show. She was booked to play several more shows this year and is missing those, so she applied for unemployment and was successful with that. I know a lot of friends have struggled because I think the first phase of this specific economic impact—I don't know what the—there have been two phases of unemployment and the first one did not really reflect the fact that freelancers existed. So, when you say, Well, who is your employer? I don't know, I got a list of twenty people. Do you want the list?

It just didn't—it—it was not built for that. I think there was some sort of second phase that made that possible for freelancers to apply for. Personally, I have not pursued those things, but it's been heartening to see that there have been funds around the city for performers who are losing income because I know from—it affects everybody; if you're in a band, or if you're in an orchestra, or—it just affects everybody. So, it's good to see that there have been funds for performing artists in Seattle that you can apply no questions asked, apply and get 250 bucks. I think that that is amazing to see. I know this is hard for people, especially who focus on performing. The same group of people—I hadn't thought—it dawned on me in the middle of May because I thought, Well, okay, I know camps aren't going to happen, and then there's always another—it's not just the second shoe dropping, it's the third and fourth and eighth shoe and you're like, What is this, a millipede?—where I forgot about weddings! I play a lot of weddings every summer, and there are not gonna be any weddings—at least public weddings. So that's just a whole other missing column that will be missing and weddings tend to pay pretty well depending on how far you have to go. For an afternoon of music-making you usually get between \$150 and \$200. Over the course of a summer with ten or twelve weekends, that adds up, so R.I.P. [Rest In Peace] weddings.

KEVIN 00:30:40: Yeah, serious. You commented a little bit on freelance musicians and both of us fall into that camp on most weeks. You touched on your friend who works for 5th Avenue or plays a lot of shows for 5th Avenue, but is totally freelance. There's no security there, and this is a time that that has become sort of apparent. I'm sure that was a thought for them before, but—

KELLY 00:31:26: Yes.

KEVIN 00:31:27: Nowhere in our minds did we ever think that something like this, that would just pull all of that right out from underneath us would happen. So, one thing that we've certainly talked about this quarter in this class [University of Washington course on musical labor] is the system that we're in and how it's set up and what's good from it and what's bad from it, just in general. Personally, I see musicians existing in two different camps: there's the freelance—like per job kind of camp—and then there's those who are lucky enough to have a contract and predictability and security. In an ideal world, say we were actually able to make change after this, what do you see being important? Did that make sense?

KELLY 00:32:39: Yeah, that's—it's hard. So, as you know, Bob—as we all know about most music organizations, they—even the Seattle Symphony does not make money from ticket sales. That is a drop in the bucket of how they get money. It's grants and over—over?—over, underwriters. Corporate donations, individual donations. Ticket sales don't do anything. It is so hard for arts organizations to stay afloat, so I would imagine even with something like 5th Avenue, it's a mixed bag where it's really not protecting anyone, that all of the musicians are—they have a contract per show and that protects the theater in some ways because they don't have extra money. They can't afford to have people on salary. It doesn't work like that.

But, also, it's so scary for the musicians because I have several friends that have played for them and they'll play two or three shows that have strings—not all of them do, but when I say consecutive, I mean that have string parts available. They'll play several shows in a row and then not get called and they don't know why. You never—you never really get any feedback from that, which is also frustrating. Was it: you were hard to work with? You didn't play well enough? We met someone else we liked better? So and so said a thing about you? You never really get to know what happened. I think it's really scary for the musicians in that way, that even though you're employed right now, the next show, you just never know what's going to happen. But I also understand that the theater doesn't really have any extra money to be able to have people on retainer. That's a good—that's a really good question. I don't know how things could—could change.

KEVIN 00:35:20: I think that (pauses) just having some sort of security and finding out a way to give that to our labor force, and having a way to create security and I know that with—with the way that we get our funding and the way that these organizations— Like you were saying, it makes it hard because there's not a lot left over after—a lot of these run a very tight budget. (*laughs*)

KELLY 00:36:06: I think probably for most organizations, by the time you finish a concert and have taken into account from the electricity bill to the music rental, to the musicians, to whatever stage crew— If you break even, somehow, that's a win. That changes for varying organizations, but for the orchestra that we play in—like, Oh, to break even and not be losing money. It's hard, when your business model looks like that, to be able to offer security to the people that you're employing. I don't know—I don't know what (*clears throat*)—excuse me—what job security looks like in those moments.

KEVIN 00:37:03: In the system that we're in right now, it doesn't seem like it's possible, right? I mean, it's still hard to imagine a way for that—some—something to work because—

KELLY 00:37:14: Yeah, my brain is just like—

KEVIN 00:37:16: You're like, Uh, but it can't. So why would—

KELLY 00:37:19: There's a wall, like—I don't—do you not see the wall? There's like a brick wall here.

KEVIN 00:37:24: Exactly. I guess, moving forward, as people who do musical work, somehow we need to break through that wall, eventually. I mean, of course, there are so many other issues and especially this week and—not that it's only been this week. We're being shown all the issues that have existed for way too long.

KELLY 00:37:57: Yeah, hundreds of years.

KEVIN 00:38:01: But for us to dream for a moment—finding a utopian system.

KELLY 00:38:12: Yeah, or even transparency would be nice. There are, in my mind, varying tiers of orchestras, where there's maybe a volunteer orchestra where people pay to play because they have a day job, but they love music and they want to keep playing, so they helped make a thing happen that they can participate in. Then there are semi-professional groups where some of the people are paid and some of the people aren't. Then there are groups where everybody's paid. And then, of course, [inaudible] \_\_\_\_\_ varying levels of quality of output. I play as a sub with the Yakima Symphony, and they have a sub list for the section. I guess, with them— Transparency is the wrong word because I don't know who's on the list. I know that I am on the list and I think I'm near, or I used to be near, the top of the list, but it would be nice to know with some groups: am I on the list? Who is on the list? What is the list? How do you make those decisions? How is that informed?

I think that I can only speak for myself. I am on it because I've auditioned several times for section positions and have advanced to later rounds, but never won any of those. So, I think that I have moved up the list through those, so I understand that process. But then there are some groups, like this chamber orchestra, where—I guess they're okay, but I don't know. There are just some groups where I don't know—I'll use the person that contracts the—most of the weddings that I play. I know that he has a pool of people. I don't know how you get on that list. I don't know if there are criteria. I don't know if it's word of mouth. I don't know if it's playing with him or for him, and then you get added. I think that that would be really helpful for musicians: to know where you stand with varying organizations. Not that it's a guarantee of anything, but just to have some concept of what the heck is going on. It's really hard to operate when you don't know where you stand with someone. So, I guess maybe—even if contracts and changing from being a freelancer or sole proprietor to an employee—if that is not feasible, at least being upfront about where you stand. I know that that might put contractors and personnel managers in a weird place. To say to someone, like, "Well, here's the list. You're second from the bottom."

Nobody really wants to hear that, but then you would at least know. I don't know. I guess I would put transparency in as much as I don't think that being able to be employees is necessarily feasible and—not that's what you're saying or have suggested. Transparency would be at the top of my hopes list.

KEVIN 00:42:03: Certainly. I didn't even think of that, but just knowing where you are on the list and—and then perhaps knowing where you are on the list would make it possible for you to try to move on the list, but you don't know where you are on the list so how are you supposed to proceed? You don't know how to proceed, exactly. That's—that seems doable, you know?

KELLY 00:42:30: Yes, it doesn't require additional resources.

KEVIN 00:42:35: Right. I asked the question in regards to: how can we destroy everything that we know and create something that would work? But that seems like an actual thing that could perhaps be, of course, disheartening, to know where you are on the list. But I think having that transparency would also eliminate some of the issues with the system that we're in now, which is, [inaudible made up first name] Blah Blah or Susie Who over here might know one of the section members or the principal of the section, and they may be able to move themselves to the top of the list without necessarily any merit involved, but just the friendship being the thing that—

KELLY 00:43:34: There's—there's a group that I used to play with that is like that. It's a hundred—not even word of mouth, but just relationship to the person who made the group is what decides who gets to play. It's super frustrating, and I don't think it's fair. Especially this week, because we're confronting our systems of white supremacy, and oppressing various groups of people for various reasons, particularly right now, and always—Black people—classical music is really white, and if you are hiring based on who your friends are, odds are most of your friends are white and your group is going to keep looking like that. If you have auditions—Like, there's a reason—It is a far from perfect system, but there's a reason that orchestral auditions are blind, and it seems silly for a group who plays every couple months, and plays pop music, to have an audition process. Like, you don't need to play Mendelssohn's Scherzo for that. That's not relevant or important. But if your hiring system is a friend of a friend, or your friend, none of that is going to change. I think for all the reasons that we've talked about, in terms of security, transparency, understanding where you fit within everything, it also denies the opportunity to a lot of people who didn't know that the opportunity was even there.

KEVIN 00:45:16: Well said.

KELLY 00:45:17: [Jokingly] The end. Thank you for coming to my TED [TED Conferences] Talk.

KEVIN 00:45:23: For sure. I think those are great points and important things to talk about, for everybody. I think everybody can benefit from that, not just a few, which is important, especially now, but always. I think that's—that's really cool, and nice to think about.

KELLY 00:45:52: Yeah. Even our little chamber orchestra I think is that way, where there's certainly a standard of ability, and I would say that—especially now—When it started, it was not—there wasn't really an audition process. I don't—I didn't audition. I just started playing, but I think I was one of the

last people to get in that way. I think, ultimately—I don't know—that group is hard because so much of it is based on interpersonal dynamics and you want to make sure that you're hiring someone that will fit in with the goals and ideals of an ensemble like that where we're self-led. But, in the same way—and our friend, Kyle, has pushed for this a lot—always—hashtag “now more than ever”—that there's just a complete lack of diversity in that group and often hiring friends of friends. Even if you have to audition, the way that people find out about it is through someone else. I don't know where—let's (pauses)—maybe it doesn't matter where, but they need to advertise and have open auditions once a year and try to make that opportunity more known because I think, particularly with that group, our hearts are in the right place.

It was so cool, but also disheartening—a couple years ago, we played an entire program—were you there when we played a George Walker piece? It was the hardest—oh my god, it was the hardest thing I've ever done, especially without a conductor. That piece is so hard. It was amazing. But we played an entire program of music written by Black composers, and—some living, some no longer living. It was so incredible to get to be exposed to that music, but also super depressing to look on the stage and see, like, an Asian person, and then a whole bunch of white people. We can do better than that, and I don't think that that diminishes the effect of having a white orchestra play for a mostly white audience—music of Black people. I think that that is still important and—

[Distracted by cats] How did you know? The other one's over here being quiet. She's just staring at me and Danny's like, Oh, are you trying to do something?

KEVIN 00:49:00: I think especially when you're—one of your mission statements, or your main mission is to expose the world to the underrepresented and marginalized communities within classical music, whether it's people of color, or women, or just you name the category—it would—it would be great if it—if that trickled down to other parts of the organization.

KELLY 00:49:35: Yeah, for sure.

KEVIN 00:49:37: I think—I think, here is visibility again, and accountability, and I think the community having an understanding as well is something that's important. You know, I think that maybe if our audience starts to care a little bit more—then we'll be forced to care.

KELLY 00:50:01: Yes, yeah.

KEVIN 00:50:02: I think social media is gonna play a big part in that as we get out of COVID, but also getting out of, or moving through and forward and continuing to reform our society's racial inequalities, and all that.

KELLY 00:50:25: I guess—related back to COVID, as we are confronting this head on right now—oh, I hate the phrase "more than ever"—things that COVID has brought us, like, "now more than ever," and, "these uncertain times"—

KEVIN 00:50:44: You've used that phrase more than ever [jokingly].

KELLY 00:50:47: Yeah, "more than ever" we're saying more than ever. "Unprecedented times," "uncertain times"—God. Now more than ever, I wish I were seeing my students in person because I—I want to talk about this with them and I want to— It's a lot of these conversations, too, I think even if it just comes to family and friends, as white people, it's important to hold each other accountable and texting is an imperfect form of communication. There's so much that can be lost that way; intent and tone. And I think what you would say is different than if you were standing face to face with someone. So to have conversations about race and inequality and systemic white supremacy—those are hard things to talk about over text and I can't wait until we're in a position to be able to see each other more because I think that those conversations, while still uncomfortable, will be better when had face to face.

Right now, how I always, regardless of COVID, communicate with my my studio families through email—I'm sending them a droll and boring email about summer lessons and, "Please give me your schedules, and we're still going to do remote lessons and we're going to use Marco Polo, so download it." There's also a section at the bottom that is—that addresses the lack of diversity in classical music, and I'm going to send them a few links to some performers—that I had—this is the part that I hate the most—I had to ask like every performer. I think I— Other than André Watts, if you asked me to name a Black violinist in classical music, 'cause I know who Regina Carter is—great. There's one. I hated that, I didn't know anybody, and that sucks for me. I need to do better. But I'm going to share a list of some performers and YouTube clips that are of black performers, and it's—they're amazing performances. Then there's another list of local organizations that are doing work to promote equal access to arts education, because, as with most things, the problem starts—if you are looking at a high school or college and you're not seeing a lot of Black musicians, the problem is not—maybe it could be—not necessarily the problem of the high school or the college. It is the problem of the preschool and the kindergarten. You have to start there, so I want to support groups that are addressing access. But I wish I could see all the parents in person and these conversations would be better, but you do what you can with what you have. So that's what—that's what I'm doing.

KEVIN 00:53:59: Well, all of that is so great and exactly what we should all be striving to do, and to educate—like you said—educate ourselves and finding ways to take what we've learned and—and pass our knowledge or our experiences on to those who we—that's our job to do, but this exists in that same realm and we just have to start bringing that into it. Not so much communicating, like, who Bach is. Yeah, of course. Sure, we need to tell them who Bach is, but we also need them who—

KELLY 00:54:43: Yeah. Well, there are—William Grant Still, George Walker—Um—doo-do-doo—There was someone [?shore?]?— Sorry, I'm going to be Googling this name—Dear—Saint-George de Chevalier?— It's some fancy French name. Joseph—Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges—cool—who was a Black composer around the same time as Mozart and early Beethoven? I never—I think maybe I'd heard the name once. It definitely didn't stick though, but—I don't know. Anyway, what I was—I want to learn more about that person, I guess is my note to self. Something—like we were talking about earlier with teaching is, teaching an instrument is not just technique and honing skills, especially through Suzuki, but— Before my interaction with Suzuki, because this is what my teacher had always said, is that her goal was to help me become the best version of myself. So, my goal as a teacher is to be supportive—holistic teaching, I guess, is perhaps a jargony way of saying that, but it's true.

KEVIN 00:56:19: Teaching not just a musician, but teaching the child.

KELLY 00:56:22: Yes, yeah, you're teaching a whole human being, and there are many behaviors and things that come along with that. Related to that, it's not the role of the teacher to just lay out information and send you off with it. What do you do with that information? How are you going to use it? How do you interact with it? And to be sure that, as part of that journey, we're including Black composers, composers of color. I know that—Tchaikovsky was gay and he probably would have been killed for it if anybody knew then—and making sure that those voices are heard. I'm sure there are some, but I don't really know of any modern composers who identify as gay or queer, and I'm sure that they're out there and I want to know about them. I don't—there's just so much that we can do and it doesn't need to be—I've been thinking about this as a teacher—where the line is between parenting—I don't want to cross a line somewhere, but I also need to stand up for what I believe in and—it's more than playing the scales, "Go practice your scales. Use a metronome. Use a tuner"—that there's so much—

[Distracted by cat] Oh my god, the bag is empty. It's an empty bag. He's now on the table. On the table.

KEVIN 00:58:14: Hey, buddy [talking to cat] Empty paper bags are— that is all they can focus on.

KELLY 00:58:24: Well, I put it on them for—for them to just crawl in but then he starts chewing holes in it and then just eats the paper because he's stupid. Anyway, I'm trying to find a balance of—I don't want to parent. That's not my job. It is my job to expose and educate and this is a form of education so—yeah, whole—teaching the whole student.

KEVIN 00:58:53: I think all that is so good and awesome. I'm trying to do the same as well as I can. I think that just taking that step and the initiative to move forward is super great. So—

KELLY 00:59:12: Yeah.

KEVIN 00:59:13: Anyway, this has been awesome, to chat. Thank you so much for—

KELLY 00:59:19: Yes!

KEVIN 00:59:20: —helping me with this. And also, it's really fun to talk about this stuff.

KELLY 00:59:27: Yeah, I know, let's talk about it more!

KEVIN 00:59:30: Exactly. You know, fun is a weird word in this sense, but this is great and I have to ask you a formal question again, here at the end. Is it okay if I use this interview and all bits about everything that we've talked about to formulate my project?

KELLY 00:59:53: Yes, yes. Yes, this is okay.

KEVIN 00:59:55: Thank you.

KELLY 00:59:56: You bet.

KEVIN 00:59:57: I'm going to turn off the recording now.

KELLY 00:59:59: Okay.